

California Activist '84

Bulletin of the Libertarian Party of California

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INTERVIEW WITH BOB LEHMAN, 1984 LPC CONVENTION COORDINATOR

CALIFORNIA ACTIVIST: You seem to be doing a lot of things differently than previous convention committees, for example: paying sales commissions, enclosing a recording with each brochure, lowering prices, and paying the LPC a flat \$1000 rather than splitting profits with them. Why?

LEHMAN: Well, there were two reasons for paying the LPC a flat fee. First, I thought it would help me win the bid, because I felt the LPC would prefer guaranteed money up front.

Second, I knew that I wanted to try several innovations, such as the ones you have mentioned, which a financial partner might criticize as being too costly. So paying the LPC \$1000 up front was a way of avoiding such a disagreement. The LPC still maintains a strong interest in the success of the 1984 Convention, but not a direct financial one.

CA: What about the other innovations you are trying. Won't they push your costs too high? For example, will those records you sent out with each brochure bring in enough extra business to justify their cost?

BOB: I don't know. Other organizations have done very well by adding soundsheets to their mailings, but it's an untried medium as far as the LPC is concerned. It would have been nice to have had time to run a test mailing before ordering 15,000 soundsheets pressed, so we would have an idea of what to expect, but there wasn't time. We are in the process of running a controlled test, though. Having sent out some brochures without soundsheets, we will compare the response rates so that future convention committees will have the benefit of our experience.

CA: Why offer sales commissions? don't you think libertarians would try to get

their friends to come to the convention without a financial incentive to do so?

BOB: I'm sure they would, eventually. But without some financial incentive, most libertarians who are planning to come to the Convention would wait until the January 31st deadline (for discount prices) to register, and by then it's a little late to start talking to friends about coming to the Convention.

Until a person has made a commitment to something, I don't believe he can be effective selling it to others. By giving people this financial incentive, I hope that more people will register early and start talking to others about the convention in time to generate more enthusiasm and more registrations. I don't mind sharing the Convention's profits with those who will help build attendance.

CA: This year's theme is also quite different from the themes of past conventions. How did you get the idea for the theme "A Tribute to our Libertarian Heritage"?

BOB: Well, I guess it goes back to my concern with the problem we face each election year. Most of the new people who get interested in our campaign, including many who actually work for our candidates, will disappear after election day, because of disappointment with the vote totals. I have long felt that we need to make our members

and campaign workers aware of the long-range nature of our movement.

David Bergland's article in Caliber about a year ago sharpened my focus on this issue, and then I happened to catch a program on PBS television where some philosopher was being interviewed about the meaning of "liberty." He was going into some detail about the different meanings of the word, and bringing up the views of Spencer, and Locke, and Jefferson, and Mill, and I said to myself, "That's what we need more of in the Libertarian Party!"

CA: Your speakers program seems to be quite complete. How did you manage to line up all those speakers so early?

BOB: A common complaint we had heard about previous state and national LP conventions was that the convention brochure didn't include enough schedule information for people to decide if they wanted to go or not. We set out in January, 1983, to try to improve in this area.

First of all, I consulted with several people, including Murray Rothbard, George Smith, Jeff Hummel and Bill Evers, concerning possible program speakers and topics relating to the theme. Then I outlined an hour-by-hour schedule of talks that would follow the history of libertarianism from its inception to the present day. Then Mike Hall and I started inviting speakers, one by one, to address each topic, holding back our invitations to the most versatile speakers, such as Ken Gregg, Leonard Liggio, and Bill Evers, until we could see which topics would be hardest to find speakers for.

Many of the speakers we asked were not only willing to speak, but were very excited

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about the particular topic we had chosen for them.

CA: How is the convention doing, financially?

BOB: We're pretty much on-budget in all areas. We have spend about \$5000 so far, producing brochures and sound-sheets, mailing, and paying the LPC their fee. From this point on we expect registrations to cover any additional costs we incur. We expect to break even if attendance is around 300. That would be higher than last year's convention attendance, but lower than in 1981.

CA: With 1984 being an election year, do you plan to do anything special to attract media attention?

BOB: The first thing we've already done is to pick a convention site that is convenient to most major media. The Sheraton-Universal is within a ten minute drive of seven Los Angeles TV stations, including CBS and NBC, and the three major Los Angeles daily newspapers are only fifteen minutes away. We felt it was important in an election year to have our convention where reporters could get to us easily.

The second thing we've done to attract the media to our convention is to invite our Presidential Candidate, David Bergland, to be our banquet speaker. David plans to spend several days in advance of the convention campaigning in California to generate media interest in the convention and in his appearance there.

Finally, we plan to offer reporters free food and drinks at some events. Our goal with the media is not just to get them to cover us, but to make them aware of the existence of a libertarian heritage. Once they realize that we aren't just a modern spin-off of the "hippie" movement, and that our ideas go back centuries, they might start to believe that we're going to be around for awhile. They might also start to report our stands on issues with more respect and less sensationalism.

CA: I notice that your convention brochure doesn't mention Galombos, or Borsodi, or

Ben Rogge. Will these individuals be given adequate recognition for their contributions to our libertarian heritage?

BOB: I doubt it. It probably would take over a year of speeches to name, let alone adequately recognize, all the people who have contributed to our libertarian heritage. There's only so much that can be covered in 2 1/2 days. A speaker might be able to squeeze in a mention of the people you named, but I don't think it would be right to emphasize them at the expense of others such as Mencken, or Read, or Nock.

Our program should not be thought of as the last word on the subject of our libertarian heritage. In 2 1/2 days we can only give a general introduction to some of the major figures. There will probably be over-emphasis of some

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- Nat Hentoff

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1962—Asst. Secretary of Defense Sylvester: "... it is inherent in government's right, if necessary, to lie ... that seems to me basic—basic."

May

31

1971—CIA director Helms briefs A.G. Mitchell on the scope of the CIA mail-opening operation.

1978—The Supreme Court rules that unannounced searches of innocent third parties is constitutional.

figures, and under- (or no-) emphasis of others. And each person attending will probably have a different idea of who should have been given more emphasis.

If people come to the convention with the idea that they are going to enrich their understanding of our libertarian heritage, while perhaps not learning all that there is to know, they will not be disappointed. They might even be inspired to look further into the subject on their own.

CA: Thanks, Bob Lehman. We are looking forward to the convention.

BOB LEHMAN is a long-time LPC activist. He has recently been appointed State Coordinator of the Bergland for President Campaign, and will begin working on this project at the completion of his convention duties.

NICE GUYS FINISH FIRST
by Steve Alexander

In his recent book, Philosophical Explanations, Robert Nozick chides philosophers for their grim zeal in presenting their ideas. "Perhaps philosophers need arguments so powerful they set up reverberations in the brain: if the person refuses to accept the conclusion, he dies." Dr. Nozick suggests it is not nice and not effective to force people, even in debate. As Ayn Rand wrote, in another context, "Don't try to force a mind."

While we Libertarians don't consider argument to be force, nor niceness to be a moral imperative, we do want people to accept our ideas. Therefore, we should practice the most effective method to do so, as long as it is moral. (Lying or equivocating may be short-term effective, but is not moral or long-term effective.)

There are two elements to any discussion: content and form. Content includes facts, feelings, opinions, and their logical construction. Form is how the content is expressed. Form relates to the participants in the conversation: their motives, their relationship, and "where they're at."

Content and form strongly influence each other, and both strongly influence our success in spreading our ideas. Unfortunately, most Libertarians emphasize content and neglect form. We read endlessly the books that analyze economics and politics. We reprint monographs from centuries past. We seem to search for the one final argument, the one perfect example, the one stunning quote that will "set up reverberations in the brain . . ."

I do not wish to denigrate Libertarian scholarship; we have the only political philosophy worthy of such attention. Practical politics, however, is two-fisted. We already can beat all comers on content. Our form is what's lacking. How many books do we read on selling, teaching, speaking, winning friends, and influencing people? I suspect not enough.

A Conversation

Let us consider a conversation between Ernest Haranguer, a dedicated Libertarian, and Mike Mainstream, a member of the general public. Ernest is well-read and maledroit (content good, form bad). They meet at a cocktail party.

Mike: So you're a Libertarian. What do Libertarians believe?

Ernest: We challenge the cult of the omnipotent state.

M: Huh? (pause) I don't know about that. I was mugged the other day, and a cop saved my life.

E: If I had a button that would eliminate all police forces, there would be blisters on my fingers from pushing it.

M: Yah? I suppose you'd turn the country over to drug pushers, blackmailers, and pornographers.

E: These undefendable people are actually heroes who deserve our respect.

M: Man, you're crazy. There have got to be some limits.

E: (Putting a fist up to Mike's face.) My freedom to swing my fist has no limit except at the tip of your nose.

Clearly Mike Mainstream is bull-headed not to join the LP after hearing such cogent and seductive arguments. But seriously, now, what did Ernest Haranguer do wrong?

Ernest's Errors

Ernest did not fully value the conversation. Advertisers spend billions of dollars to deliver brief messages to an indifferent audience. Mike Mainstream actually volunteered to hear about Libertarianism. Such an opportunity is priceless--don't waste it.

Ernest talked as if Mike were a hard-core Libertarian. Obviously, that wasn't true. Perhaps Ernest thought tough talk would convert Mike instantly. But remember, it took John Galt and Ayn Rand a thousand pages to convert Dagny Taggart. People don't turn around instantly, and as they change, they change grad-

ually. The most practical goal is to nudge people closer to the light with each encounter.

Ernest wanted to create a hard-core activist. He probably would have settled for a new registration. Hopefully, his goal was not to insult and alienate Mike. His effect, however, was just that. Ernest is the only Libertarian Mike knows. He is "Mr. Libertarian." Mike or anyone else, will judge a philosophy by who holds it and by how that adherent behaves.

Ernest didn't care about Mike or Mike's opinions. Ernest was debating, fighting with words, and using canned arguments and jargon. Mike might accept a philosophy that provides for his own well-being and the well-being of society. He will not accept a philosophy that seems to treat those concerns as unimportant. Liberty is good for people and other living things, but Ernest didn't say so.

Improving Your Form

Before Ernest and Mike go back in the ring for round two, let's coach Ernest on form and strategy. Form is based on those intangibles: motive, relationship, and "where they're at." Strategy is the use of content, relationship, and "where they're at" to satisfy your motive.

Ernest's motive should be to make Mike more libertarian than he is now, and not for Ernest to show off his knowledge or debating skills. The ultimate goal is for Mike to be an activist Libertarian. The minimum is for Mike to have goodwill towards the philosophy and the movement.

This means Ernest should be prepared to range from basic principles to advanced studies (content). It also means Ernest must not lose sight of his own motives (form). If Mike does not accept Ernest's ideas, or even becomes abusive, Ernest should stay calm and friendly. It does the Libertarian Party no

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good for Ernest to counter-attack, and a counterattack reveals that Ernest has strayed from his original motive.

Ernest must build a relationship with Mike based on mutual respect and real communication. Ernest wants Mike to listen to and respect Ernest and Ernest's ideas. The price for that is that Ernest must listen to and respect Mike and Mike's ideas first.

Ernest gets an extra bonus by listening to Mike; he will know "where Mike is at," and be able to tailor his presentation to Mike for maximum effect. Is Mike liberal or conservative? What issues are most important to him? What opinions or phrases are taboo? Before Ernest proposes legal child prostitution, he might check whether Mike will see that as a theoretical point or a reference to his runaway daughter.

Ernest must know what position Mike holds and how deep it goes. A deep-seated statist is unlikely to convert, at least through casual conversation, so the best we can expect is tolerance. An instinctive libertarian needs only to understand himself. To determine this, Ernest might start with general principles, apply them to a few nonemotional issues, then illustrate with some poignant anecdotes. At all times Ernest should be watching Mike's reactions, to speak with caution when Mike seems upset, to speak with boldness when Mike is ready for a breakthrough, to retrench and consolidate gains when Mike resists some new point.

Disagreements

Disagreements may be analyzed as differences in goals and perspectives. Goals are whatever it is that we want. Perspectives are however we view a situation. The greater the difference between Ernest and Mike on these two elements, the greater their disagreement. Resolve the differences and we resolve the disagreement.

For example, Mike may support business regulation and deficit spending. Mike

TENTATIVE CONVENTION AGENDA FEBRUARY 18-20, 1984

Saturday, February 18, 1984:

9-10 A.M.	Credentialling (PLEASE BE ON TIME)
10 A.M.	Call to Order
10-10:15 A.M.	Agenda
10:15-11 A.M.	Credentials
	("Give Me Liberty" and Lunch)
2-3 P.M.	Annual Report of Officers, Committee Chairs, and Staff
3-5 P.M.	ByLaws and Rules Committee Report
5-6 P.M.	Platform Committee Report

Sunday, February 19, 1984:

9 A.M.-12 Noon	Platform (cont.)
	(Lunch)
2-6 P.M.	Resolutions and Other Business

Monday, February 20, 1984:

9-11 A.M.	Elections of Party Officers and Judicial Committee
11 A.M.-12 Noon	Endorsements of Candidates
	(Sam Adams Luncheon)
2-6 P.M.	LPC Executive Committee Meeting

has read Keynes and Galbraith. His goals are full employment and consumer protection. His perspectives are that big business controls the economy, true competition is gone, and an economy can be in equilibrium without unemployed workers.

When Mike says he supports regulation and budget deficits, Ernest should not leap into battle. First, he should have Mike explain his position, and Ernest should listen to him. Mike is not anti-capitalism, he is pro-prosperity. He only thinks we need government intervention to support prosperity.

Second, Ernest should find a broad, vague goal on which the two can agree, such as a healthy, prosperous economy. Third, Ernest can explain what conditions lead to prosperity and what conditions block it. This is long and difficult, because Ernest may have to describe the commercial processes of modern society. Mike will be skeptical, but Ernest has established some credibility by sharing goals with Mike (healthy, prosperous economy). The objective of step three is to give Mike a new perspective

on the world, one closer to Ernest's.

Finally, Ernest should review Mike's original position in light of the new information and perspective. Mike should not be reminded that it was his position. The point is to acknowledge Mike's earlier position as legitimate, but not as good as his new position. Mike and Ernest are now on the same side.

Partnership

A political discussion need not be a conflict. The discussion should be a partnership, where both people are working towards one goal: to see whether Mike agrees with Libertarianism. Ernest need not be threatened or upset if Mike doesn't. The truth of Libertarianism is not in doubt. The future of society is not at stake. Only Mike's impression of Libertarianism is in question, and for that, calm rationality and courtesy are best.

STEVE ALEXANDER is Treasurer of Santa Clara County Libertarian Central Committee, and is actively involved in the 1985 LPC Convention, which will be held in San Mateo.



DELEGATES: Your attendance at the upcoming LPC Convention may be a newsworthy event to your local newspaper. To get a story printed, just retype the news release below, substituting your own name and other information, onto your own letterhead (or blank typing paper) double-spaced, and send it, or better yet, hand deliver it to your local paper before the deadline for their last issue before the Convention:

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(Date)

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LOCAL DELEGATE ELECTED

{Your Name} of {Your City} has been elected as a delegate to the 1984 State Convention of the Libertarian Party of California by the Libertarian Central Committee of {Your County}. The convention is scheduled for February 17 - 20, at the Sheraton-Universal Hotel in Universal City, California.

Business to be taken up at the three day convention of the LPC includes electing officers for the coming year, amending the LPC platform and bylaws, and developing a long-range promotional plan for the LPC.

Libertarian Presidential Candidate David Bergland will address the convention at a fundraising banquet Sunday night, February 19.

Over 20 talks are scheduled on subjects relating to the convention's theme, "A Tribute to Our Libertarian Heritage". Speakers include former Libertarian Presidential Candidates John Hospers and Ed Clark, and 1982 Senatorial Candidate Joe Fuhrig. Tributes will be given by Breakfast and Luncheon speakers to five illustrious champions of Liberty: John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Lysander Spooner, Ludwig von Mises, and Ayn Rand.

Patrick Henry's famous "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech will be performed in full revolutionary costume by actor Marshall Bruce Evoy.

--END--

1984 CAMPAIGNS

Are you planning to run for federal, state or local office in 1984? Or are you searching for candidates in your county or region? If you need advice about the 1984 campaigns, contact the Candidate Coordinator for your area.

Each coordinator has been a candidate at least once, and will be able to give you advice about recruiting the best candidate for the race, collecting signatures, and beginning to organize the campaign.

If you already have your candidates picked out, make sure your Coordinator has your candidates' names, addresses and phone numbers so they will be on our candidates mailing list.

Southern California:

Sam Treynor 213-546-2846

Northern California:

Eric Garriss 415-864-0952



BERGLAND CAMPAIGN NEWS

Bergland Headquarters at 1525 Mesa Verde Drive East, Suite 105 West, Costa Mesa, CA 92626, (telephone 714-754-1776) will be staffed full-time beginning February 2, 1984 by newly-appointed Campaign Manager **Bill Evers** and Assistant **Mary Gingell**. . Grand opening of the office is scheduled for February 14. . Media Coordinator **Laurie Sano** is already hard at work

developing media contacts and setting up interviews and news coverage for Bergland. . . Ballot Drive field coordinator **John Robertson** is working to put Bergland-Lewis on the ballot throughout the country. . **Bob Lehman** has just been appointed California State Coordinator for the Campaign. . . **Melinda Pillsbury-Foster** is the new national scheduler for Bergland, scheduling David's appearances from July through November.

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CONGRATULATIONS. . .

To **Charles Beers** of Mira Loma, the winner of a complete package for attendance at the 1984 LPC Convention, "A Tribute to Our Libertarian Heritage." Charles entered his name in the drawing by being one of several hundred LPC members who renewed their membership before January 5!

LPC OFFICERS AND STAFF

Mary Gingell, Chair
c/o Bergland for President
1525 Mesa Verde Drive, East
Suite 105 West
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
714-754-1776 (office)

Eric Garris, Northern Vice Chair
1800 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-864-0952 (messages)

Melinda Pillsbury-Foster, Southern
Vice Chair
7019 Chimineas
Reseda, CA 91335
213-342-9716

Carolyn Treynor, Secretary
Sam Treynor, Treasurer
629 19th Street
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
213-546-2846

Marshall Fritz, Executive Director
5533 E. Swift
Fresno, CA 93727
209-292-6700

Karen Huffman, Office Coordinator
401 E. Taylor Street
San Jose, CA 95112
408-971-7410 (office)
408-252-0947 (home)

THANK YOU. . .

Michael Tejeda and Mark Ross of Alameda County, for continuing to provide the LPC with printing of the California Activist. We wouldn't be here without you!

Membership Application

LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF CALIFORNIA
Central Committee
401 E. Taylor Street
San Jose, CA 95112
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I live in _____ County and wish to be a member

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☐ Decline to State (no party) ☐ Not Registered to Vote

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